

**ANKENY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IOWA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 29, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Brody Brecht of Ankeny High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Iowa Baseball Player of the Year**. Brecht is the second Gatorade Iowa Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ankeny High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Brecht as Iowa's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Brecht joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo High School, Mich.), Jon Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Preparatory School, Wash.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman High School, Tenn.), Clayton Kershaw (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas), Rick Porcello (2006-2007, Seaton Hall Preparatory School, N.J.) and Kris Bryant (2009-10, Bonanza High School, Nev.).

The 6-foot-4, 210-pound senior right-handed pitcher and outfielder compiled a 3-0 record on the mound with a 2.45 ERA and 69 strikeouts in 34.1 innings this past season, leading the Hawks to a 21-9 record and a berth in the Class 4A state final. A First Team All-State selection and Iowa's No. 3 draft prospect as ranked by Perfect Game, Brecht also posted a .333 batting average with three home runs, 27 RBI and an OPS of 1.084.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Brecht has volunteered locally on behalf of his church youth group. "Brody Brecht is a special talent," said Ankeny High head coach Joe Balvanz. "I could coach for a long time and never run across a young man as talented as he is. I have seen him grow from a lanky kid with a live fastball to one of the most dominant arms this state has seen in quite some time."

Brecht has maintained a 4.08 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play football on scholarship at the University of Iowa this fall, but is projected as an early-round selection in July's Major League Baseball draft.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Brecht joins recent Gatorade Iowa Baseball Players of the Year Calvin Harris (2019-20 & 2018-19, Western Dubuque High School), Connor Van Scoyoc (2017-18, Jefferson High School), and John Swanda (2016-17, Roosevelt High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Brecht has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Brecht is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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